

We claim:

1. An apparatus for determining food temperature, said apparatus comprising:
  - a piercing element;
  - a temperature sensor integral with the piercing element;
  - a main handle connected to the piercing element;
  - a handle portion removably connected to the main handle; and
  - a display integral within the handle portion, electronically connected to the temperature sensor, whereby a temperature sensed by the temperature sensor is displayed by the display.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the piercing element is a fork having a plurality of tines.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising a plurality of temperature sensors, wherein each temperature sensor is integral with one of the plurality of tines on the multi-tined fork.
4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the display is rotatable.

5. The apparatus of claim 4 further comprising a motion sensor integral to the display, wherein the motion sensor automatically rotates the display whereby an image in the display is substantially upright.
6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the display includes a doneness scale containing multiple stages of doneness.
7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the piercing element is heat-resistant stainless steel.
8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the main handle and the handle portion are commercial-grade aluminum.
9. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a button electronically connected to the display and used to scroll through a set of options on the display.
10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the display further comprises light emitting diodes.
11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the piercing element is a single tine.

12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the main handle further comprises a first set of spring-loaded contacts positioned to mate with a second set of contacts on the handle portion.

13. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the display contains a digital temperature reading of the sensed temperature.

14. A method for cleaning an apparatus for determining food temperature, wherein the apparatus comprises a piercing element; a temperature sensor integral with the piercing element; a main handle connected to the piercing element; a handle portion removably connected to the main handle; and a display integral within the handle portion, electronically connected to the temperature sensor, said method comprising the steps of:

removing the main handle from the handle portion; and

washing the main handle connected to the piercing element.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the step of washing the main handle connected to piercing element further comprises the steps of:

placing the main handle, connected to the piercing element, into the dishwasher;

and

initiating the dishwasher.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:  
drying the main handle connected to the piercing element; and  
reattaching the handle portion to the main handle.
17. A system for determining food temperature, said system comprising:  
a means for sensing food temperature insertable into food items for sensing the temperature of the food;  
a means for holding, for holding the means for sensing food temperature;  
a means for displaying, for displaying the temperature of the food items; and  
a means for reattaching for temporarily separating the means for displaying from the means for sensing temperature thereby permitting washing the means for sensing temperature without damaging the means for displaying.
18. The system of claim 17 wherein the means for displaying further includes a means for doneness for displaying a doneness of the food items in accordance with a scale of doneness.
19. The system of claim 18 further comprising a means for selecting for selecting a food type to be associated with the means for doneness.

20. The system of claim 17 further comprising a means for rotating for automatically rotating the means for displaying, keeping the means for displaying in a substantially upright position.